



Summer 2020 EJA Fellow:

Name: Emily Percifield

Law School: Loyola University Chicago School of Law

Organization: Ascend Justice

Entry 1: June 19, 2020

I was generously selected as one of this summer's Equal Justice America Fellows, and am currently working at Ascend Justice in Chicago in the Order of Protection division. As many of you know, being an advocate for survivors of gender-based violence is something very close to my heart. This internship will help me become a better advocate for survivors seeking legal remedies in the future.

Due to COVID-19, my internship and how we deliver services looks a bit different than I had expected. Instead of the walk-in clinic, Ascend Justice is providing remote services to survivors of domestic violence seeking Emergency Orders of Protection. I have been able to assist clients over the phone in preparing petitions for EOPs.

Legal aid organizations often do not have the funds to pay their summer interns. Equal Justice America offers fellowships for law students working at legal aid organizations across the country. Please consider donating to Equal Justice America so that my work, and the work of my peers, may continue.

Entry 2: July 10, 2020

I've been at Ascend Justice for almost two months now and have enjoyed continuing to work with clients on emergency orders of protection. The OP clinic is still remote, but the court has started to hear non-emergency cases remotely. I've noticed some challenges with follow through and continuity of contact in regard to challenges with technology and communication given the health crisis. I was expecting to see a surge in hotline calls following the holiday weekend, but overall, things have stayed pretty steady.

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Entry 3: July 31, 2020

I can't believe I'm already nearing the end of my internship with Ascend Justice. I have still been working with clients remotely to file emergency orders of protection and continue to face new challenges. I've had the



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opportunity to work with clients who speak Spanish but found it difficult at first to express emotional support and maintain a personal connection with the client while using a translator. In addition to the hotline, I'm working on creating an instruction sheet to help individuals who need to file a motion in order to have their case reinstated under the current set of circumstances. I'm also researching new case law for the Illinois Domestic Violence Act, as well as looking at other states' domestic violence statutes in regard to online harassment.

Please consider donating to Equal Justice America so that my work, and the work of my peers, may continue. Thank you all so much!

Entry 4: August 14, 2020

Last Friday was my last day with Ascend Justice. While it didn't always look the way I had initially expected, I still had such an amazing experience this summer. I am so lucky and appreciative that they were able to transition their interns to a remote program. Since we were remote, I was able to observe the attorneys on client interviews and learn new tips and techniques. I was still able to work directly with clients and learn how to maintain a personal connection with the clients over the phone. I couldn't have asked for a better internship this summer and am looking forward to continuing to volunteer with Ascend Justice this fall!

Thank you all for supporting me this summer!